Drift HD Ghost

If you've been onto YouTube any time in the past year, you might have noticed that the world is going nuts for first-person POV (point of view) clips.

I have to admit that I'm a big fan. The more extreme the sport the better, and with view counts into the millions, it's no surprise that with such a high demand, the camera business now has some tasty new toys.

The Ghost is a very good-looking piece of hardware. I like the shape. It's a lot more aerodynamic than some of its rivals, which is a good start for things like motorsport and wing suiting.

The camera feels nice and tough too, which is great for pastimes like mountain biking and parkour. So tough that there is no included protective housing — and it is guaranteed waterproof up to 3 metres straight out of the box.

A removable hatch at the back covers the battery, card and ports. The bullet shape is tailor-made for helmet, mask and goggle-mounting, but there's also a standard ¼-inch threaded mount, providing multiple mounting choices. The shape also allows space for a 2-inch Gorilla Glass-protected LCD, which is great for playback and framing up.

Of course if the thing's already on your head, you can also frame up on your iOS device through the built-in Wi-Fi and the Drift app. With this, you can also change settings, shoot photos, start and stop recordings and play back video.

Transfer, upload and edit functions are also available through the app, making the whole process completely mobile. The large buttons on the top of the camera can be used to navigate, while Android compatibility is reportedly in the works. I think they're in the beta stage right now.

The lens can be easily changed should the original get damaged, and covers a 170 degree field of view, which is a wide, distorted view. It's essentially a three-way field of view (FOV) lens, with a focus depth of 0,5 metres to infinity, and there are three menu-selectable settings: super-wide 170, standard-wide 127, or normal 90 degrees. It can also be manually rotated through 300 degrees, allowing any orientation required.

One of my favourite features is the adjustable frame rate. The standard 25 frames per second (fps) will record 1080p and can be pushed up to 30 fps at the same resolution.

At 720p, you have the option of 25, 30, 50 or 60 fps. The higher the frame rate, the smoother the slow-motion effect. This drop in resolution is pretty standard even with big film cameras.

Video files can be recorded in both MP4 (a compressed format for easy sharing) and Quicktime MOV format for full resolution. Still images are recorded as JPEGs in increments of 11, 8 and 5 Megapixels, and all images are recorded on an optional microSDHC card with support up to 32 GB.

There are four operational modes to choose from: Video, Photo, Time Lapse and Burst. Video mode allows for resolution, frame rate, FOV and exposure control. Photo mode allows for resolution, FOV and exposure control.

The two others allow additional creative control and the Time Lapse mode lets you capture a single image. The Burst function allows multiple images to be automatically captured, both at specific time intervals.

Another fantastic feature is the industry-first, two-way LED remote. An included wrist strap means you can wear it like a wristwatch and it can be charged using the provided USB cable.

There are two big buttons, which start and stop recording. A green light indicates the camera is ready to record, while a red light confirms that recording is in progress. It's a nice, easy way to quickly tell what's going on, so that you can concentrate on what you're doing.

The overall image is nicely detailed with vivid colours. On a computer, the results are crisp and quite richly hued, and on an HD TV, it all comes to life very nicely for a piece of tech this size. The sound quality is nothing to be snubbed at either.

It's a fantastic step in the right direction for Drift. The shape alone sets it apart, and the features kick ass. The price is not bad for all those bells and whistles, so if you're in the market for an action camera, type Drift HD Ghost into that ol' YouTube search bar, and see for yourself.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Sensor type..... CMOS
Effective pixels..... 11
Maximum resolution..... 1080p
Video formats.... MP4, Quicktime MOV
Digital zoom..... 10x
Supported media..... microSD cards
Internal size..... 256 MB
Audio..... Microphone input, built-in speaker, audio recording
Inputs..... 3,5 mm stereo audio, HDMI
Outputs..... HDMI Type C connector (cable not included)
Connectivity..... USB Plug and Play, mini-B USB connector
Compatibility..... Windows XP and up / Mac OS 10.2 and up
Display..... 2-inch articulating, hinged screen
Dimensions (LxWxD) 105 x 52 x 33 mm
Weight..... 167g

Price..... R4 650

Verdict
Aerodynamic design and long list of features make this a strong competitor in its field.

Supplied by Linafield (Pty) Ltd

Website www.driftcameras.co.za

OUR RATING: 87 / 100